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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [EG](#) [QA](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALI TFG PRIME MINISTER GHEDI OPTIMISTIC ABOUT  
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 2185

[1](#)B. ADDIS ABABA 1771

Classified By: ERIC WONG, ACTING DCM. REASON: 1.4 (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi, accompanied by TFG Foreign Minister Hussein Elabe Fahiye, informed Ambassador on July 27 that earlier meetings with AU Commission Chairperson Konare and French FM Kouchner "went well," with Kouchner noting that France was providing USD 500,000 to transport a contingent from Burundi to deploy with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). PM Ghedi expressed optimism about the ongoing Somali National Reconciliation Conference (NRC), which was expected to continue for another 45 days, in order to promote reconciliation and forgiveness, as well as the roadmap for political transition and 2009 elections. The conference would also likely recommend the registration of property ownership, to clarify the status of property currently being occupied, which remained contentious. Ghedi cited no new formulas for power-sharing but noted that individuals could be replaced, and offered to step down as Prime Minister, if it led to Somaliland supporting the TFG. On international partners, Ghedi appealed for U.S. assistance in facilitating meetings with the prime ministers of Egypt and Qatar, citing Qatar's opposition to the TFG and its proposal to host an alternate Somali reconciliation conference in either Asmara or Doha. Italy had pledged 10 million Euros for AMISOM, and another 5 million Euros for the NRC. Ghedi asserted that former Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) leader Adan Hashi Ayro had recently met with "Islamicists" in Ethiopia's Somali Region, and had reportedly formed an alliance with Ethiopian rebels from the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in order to destabilize both Somali and the adjacent Somali Region. END SUMMARY.

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FRANCE SUPPORTING BURUNDI CONTINGENT FOR AMISOM  
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[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador and A/DCM met on July 27 with TFG Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Ghedi and TFG Foreign Minister Hussein Elabe Fahiye, who were visiting Addis Ababa for consultations with African Union Commission Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. Ghedi was also

scheduled to meet Ethiopian PM Meles on July 28, prior to departing July 29. According to Ghedi, his meetings with Konare and Kouchner "went well," with Kouchner noting that France was providing USD 500,000 to help transport a French-trained and supported contingent from Burundi to deploy with AMISOM. Kouchner had reportedly said that it was now "too early" to deploy a hybrid (i.e., AU-UN) peacekeeping force in Somalia.

13. (C) PM Ghedi expressed optimism about the ongoing NRC, observing that it "started very well" and had surpassed expectations. Many in the international community--except Uganda, Kenya, Yemen, and Ethiopia--had doubted the NRC would occur; the UN did not attend the conference opening. The recent amnesty had encouraged the emergence of moderates in Mogadishu; only former CIC leader Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and "politicians" remained in isolation in Asmara. The next 6 days would address forgiveness among Somali clans, concluding with a ceremony involving TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf, PM Ghedi, and others declaring forgiveness. Then, the "political reconciliation process" would be presented: addressing such political transition issues as the constitution, the establishment of political parties, power-sharing, conducting a census, the formation of a national electoral board, and preparations for 2009 national elections. The NRC would thus continue for another 45 days: 30 days in order to further reconciliation, and another 10-15 days to promote the roadmap for transition. If the NRC concluded successfully, some 300-400 traditional leaders (ougazes, sultans, elders) would travel to Mecca, at the invitation of Saudi Arabia's King Abdallah.

14. (C) Ghedi asserted that reconciliation had led to improved security in Mogadishu, with no mortar attacks or bombings in the last 4-5 days. Mogadishu Mayor Mohamed Dhere had cleared

roads in the city, including in Bakara Market, and had removed illegally constructed kiosks. A delegation of EU and UN representatives was scheduled to visit Mogadishu on July 28.

15. (C) The occupation of property in Mogadishu by Hawiye/Habr-Gedir/Ayr and other sub-clans remained a contentious issue, Ghedi said, adding that even two TFG cabinet ministers were directly affected, with one minister occupying the other's house. Ghedi said he expected the NRC to call for property to be registered to original owners. Property registration would serve merely to acknowledge who was occupying property, he said; it would not lead to immediate evictions. The UN Human Settlements Program (UN HABITAT) sought to assist with the repatriation of displaced Somalis, he said, but that would require Somalis returning to their original residences. Ghedi also appealed for international donor assistance to help fund the construction of low-income housing for Somalia.

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GHEDI READY TO GIVE UP OFFICE--IF SOMALILAND JOINS TFG  
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16. (C) Asked the outcome if the NRC were to make power-sharing recommendations, Ghedi noted that the Hawiye clan now had 61 seats in parliament, and that each of the four major Somali clans had 7 ministers in the federal government. Power-sharing was thus not an issue, he said, although individual "personalities" could be replaced. Asked how the TFG would respond if the NRC were to recommend the replacement of TFG principals, Ghedi replied that he was ready to be replaced, if necessary. Ghedi added that if Somaliland sought the Prime Minister position, "I will offer it for the sake of Somali unity." Ghedi noted his close family ties to Somaliland leaders, and asserted that his family was currently collecting and sending monthly rent from Mogadishu to 10-15 Somaliland absentee landlords that it represented. FM Fahiye added that he was from Borema, in western Somaliland, and that peace in Mogadishu would help attract support from those "in the north" (i.e., Somaliland).

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SLOW DEPLOYMENT OF AMISOM HAMPERS ETHIOPIAN WITHDRAWAL  
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¶17. (C) Ghedi complained that slow deployment of AMISOM hampered the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. The anticipated success of the NRC in September 2007 would present an opportunity for Ethiopian troops to withdraw, Ghedi said. Furthermore, both Ethiopia and Uganda were currently training TFG security forces; once 10,000 were trained, security could be handled, so long as "terrorist elements" were targeted. Citing strong statements in support of AMISOM and the NRC by the U.S. and UK at the previous international contact group meeting, FM Fahiye appealed for greater financial support from donors. Ghedi added that while Italy had pledged 10 million Euros for AMISOM to the AU, and another 5 million Euros to support the NRC, these funds had not yet been received.

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ASSISTANCE NEEDED TO ENGAGE EGYPT AND QATAR  
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¶18. (C) While expressing appreciation for recent support from Saudi Arabia, PM Ghedi underscored the need for the TFG to engage other Arab states, particularly Egypt and Qatar. Ghedi said he sought to see Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif or Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, as Somalia needed to "strike a balance" between Egypt and Ethiopia. Ghedi said it was also important for him to meet with Qatar's Prime Minister Hamad, as Qatar was currently only meeting TFG "opponents" and had close ties to Eritrea's President Isaias. According to Ghedi, Qatari PM Hamad had consulted Saudi Arabia's King Abdallah to seek Saudi support for a Somali reconciliation conference in Asmara or Doha; Abdallah had reportedly responded that Saudi Arabia was supporting the existing NRC in Mogadishu. Ghedi added that during recent UNSC consultations, in response to a USG representative

calling for immediate support to the TFG, the Qatari PermRep had stated that there could be "no support" of the TFG unless Ethiopian troops withdrew from Somalia. FM Fahiye questioned why the USG could not influence Qatar. Ambassador pledged to convey Ghedi's request for meetings to appropriate officials in Cairo and Doha.

¶19. (C) Citing recent meetings with U.S. officials in Washington, Ghedi expressed appreciation for U.S. support, and noted that President Yusuf (now visiting Puntland), FM Fahiye, and other TFG ministers would meet soon in Nairobi with U.S. officials. Security, reconciliation, health, education, and water were priorities for discussion, he said. Ghedi observed that he would accompany President Yusuf to the UN General Assembly in New York in September, in order to follow up on previous consultations with UNSC members.

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EX-CIC ELEMENTS ALLIED WITH ETHIOPIA'S ONLF REBELS  
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¶10. (C) Questioned about how Ethiopia's ongoing counterinsurgency against ethnic Somali ONLF rebels in Ethiopia's Somali Regional State affected Somalia, Ghedi asserted that "Islamicists" led by former CIC leader Adan Hashi Ayro had met recently in Ferfer, Ethiopia (part of the Somali Region's Gode Zone, bordering Somalia), and were now in an alliance with the ONLF to destabilize Somalia and Ethiopia's adjacent Somali Region. Members of the ONLF, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and other "terrorist elements" were now in Asmara, Ghedi said. As Ayro was close to ONLF leaders and sought to destabilize Somalia, the situation in the Ogaden was of concern to the TFG. Alluding to reports that Ethiopia's counterinsurgency in the Ogaden was causing civilian suffering, Ghedi noted that any conflict would "touch the people," particularly as there was much cross-border linkage among pastoralist Somalis in both Somalia and Ethiopia's Somali Region. Ghedi pledged to raise concerns about the Ogaden counterinsurgency with PM Meles.

¶11. (C) COMMENT. Prime Minister Ghedi's statement that the ongoing National Reconciliation Conference would spend 30 days fostering reconciliation and forgiveness, and then another 10-15 days discussing the political transition leading up to 2009 elections, reflects an important departure from earlier briefings (ref B), in which he highlighted that the NRC would aim only at "social reconciliation." Ghedi's observation that he would yield his position as Prime Minister to a Somalilander "for the sake of Somali unity," and his highlighting that Foreign Minister Fahiye hails from Somaliland, underscores that even if the NRC succeeds in addressing power-sharing, property registration, and preparations for 2009 national elections, the status of Somaliland remains unresolved. END COMMENT.  
YAMAMOTO